

APPENDIX: YOUR MAIN OPTIONS FOR LEARNING AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Approach	Summary	Costs
Maintain the e-KSF	<p>You can continue to use the e-KSF by entering into a commercial contract with Radcliffe Solutions (who own and will provide the e-KSF from April 2012).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No need to transfer existing e-KSF data. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fully compliant with the detailed requirements of the KSF (including 2010 flexible guidance). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Flexible self-service models, proven self-service roll-out. <input type="checkbox"/> Some lack of clarity about future development road map. <input type="checkbox"/> Does not readily handle competency frameworks other than the KSF. <input type="checkbox"/> Would need an alternative solution for import of staff data, once the ESR/e-KSF link comes to an end in April 2012. For example, organisations could procure a generic outbound data feed from ESR. 	<p>Detail to follow from Radcliffe Solutions.</p>
Switch to ESR	<p>We recommend that you take advice about the benefits and costs of ESR, from the national ESR team themselves.</p>	
<p>Move to alternative data storage systems - We see a range of alternative, often low-cost options being explored by many NHS Trusts. These include the following:</p>		
Commercial off-the-shelf systems	<p>We see an increase in commercial companies targeting NHS organisations with performance, talent and learning systems. Our list of pros and cons here is necessarily a generalisation – please contact us if you'd like further information about systems that might suit your needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wide range of functionality to select from. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clear accountabilities – easy to maintain leverage over commercial provider and have clear points of contact to fix problems. <input type="checkbox"/> Often do more than you need them to (so you may be paying for functionality you don't need). <input type="checkbox"/> Generally not developed for the NHS, so require customisation/configuration to meet NHS processes, language and reporting. 	<p>Costs are highly variable and are usually in the range of £5-25 per head per year.</p>
Systems based on Microsoft SharePoint	<p>SharePoint is a powerful tool, provided licence-free by Microsoft to all English NHS Trusts. SharePoint can be configured through forms and workflows to become a flexible appraisal and learning tool.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leverages existing IT infrastructure and systems. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A completely configurable approach – SharePoint can be designed to reflect your exact appraisal/development processes and forms. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Freely available plugins can turn SharePoint into a repository and player for e-learning – which will then run fast inside the Trust network. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Can be linked to other Microsoft identity systems for single sign-on. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Low training/change management requirement – staff access through their existing mechanisms (Outlook, intranet). <input type="checkbox"/> Off the shelf SharePoint-based appraisal solutions are probably not appropriate, so requires some customisation. 	<p>No licence fee for SharePoint (all NHS organisations have the required licences, free of charge). There may be costs for development of forms and workflows.</p>

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Systems based on open-source technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔ Open source tools can be used and downloaded entirely free of charge. Developers generally retain a copyright, but grant users a free licence to use that copyright. ✔ The main open source tools also benefit from a very large community of technical developers, meaning that they progress rapidly in terms of functionality and usability. ✘ Licence free doesn't mean entirely free – you need to consider hosting, configuration and maintenance costs. ✘ You would generally not have a contractual relationship with the software developer, so there may be slightly higher risks associated with no one to chase up if things go wrong (though you can buy maintenance/support contracts). <p>As examples of open source, we would recommend looking at three tools we know well: Moodle (learning management) and Mahara (e-portfolio/CPD) which are both true open source, and Totara which is a variant of Moodle aimed at large organisations.</p>	<p>No licence fees for open source technology. Generally low hosting/maintenance cost and low cost of configuration.</p>
Bespoke locally-developed systems	<p>Many organisations have developed local databases and reporting tools, either to replace or “work around” national solutions. These are often built using Microsoft Access or Excel. These definitely have their place, though we would question the wisdom of developing an Access database to replace the e-KSF. It would almost certainly be cheaper to contract for the e-KSF, where the development costs are already incurred.</p> <p>In this category “locally developed systems” we'd also place intranet sites designed to store KSF Post Outlines from the e-KSF. This is often a good approach for hosting of existing content, but not so useful for tracking assignment of Post Outlines to people or for creating/updating Post Outlines.</p>	<p>Direct costs are usually low, but true costs of time and ongoing maintenance, and risks of losing knowledge if key staff depart, can be high.</p>
Manual (pen and paper or Excel spreadsheet) approaches	<p>We always recommend considering the “good enough” solution. Is it good enough to phone or email all managers and ask them about appraisals completed and learning plans, and then store these on an Excel spread sheet? Or even to have no central storage and make managers accountable for keeping accurate records? In general, the costs of these approaches are very low, but the effort required to consolidate data and create useful reports for audit bodies (e.g. CQC, NHSLA) and commissioners can be very high. Relying on manager self-reporting in this way also introduces risks of errors and omissions.</p>	<p>Low/no cost of developing system, but high cost of administration and very high cost in creating reports.</p>

For further information please contact your Regional e-KSF Account Manager or contact info@think-associates.co.uk


Think...what you could do